

REMARKS

The Office Action of February 25, 2009, has been carefully considered.

Subject matter headings have been added to the specification.

Claims 1-13 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,406,833 to Nouel.

Claims 1-13 have now been canceled and replaced by a new set of Claims 14-26, written in proper form for U.S. practice. The scope of new Claims 14-26 is thought to correspond to the scope of original Claims 1-13.

The concept of using lightening areas in web offset printing was first disclosed by the inventor in FR 2660245 in 1990 (this reference was discussed on page 4 of the present specification). The essential concept disclosed in that reference was that printing can be improved by creating small, non-ink-accepting surfaces in the ink-accepting surfaces of the printing plate. This reference was also discussed in column 2 of the Nouel patent cited in the Office action.

FR 2660245 discloses lightening which is carried out with conventional screens, the so-called amplitude modulated screens. These screens create small non-ink-accepting surfaces having the same area, and as noted in the Nouel patent, good results were obtained on matte and ordinary papers, but it was not possible to utilize the process on an industrial scale, particularly on coated and smooth papers.

An improved lightening process was disclosed in the cited Nouel patent utilizing a frequency modulated or stochastic screen, producing lightening surfaces of the same area, but distributed in a random manner. This process is also discussed on page 4 of the present specification, which makes reference to EP-A-070228, corresponding to the cited Nouel patent. Disadvantages of this process are found in the

paragraph bridging pages 4 and 5 of the present specification.

The present application is directed to a further improvement for carrying out the basic invention previously disclosed in FR 2660245 and in the Nouel patent. The inventor now proposes to carry out the lightening, with conventional and/or stochastic screens, using at least two groups of small non-ink-accepting surfaces, or lightening surfaces. There is a first group of non-ink-accepting surfaces which are effective for lightening *per se* because of their area, this being the group of surfaces disclosed in both FR 2660245 and the Nouel patent.

Moreover, there is a second group of non-ink-accepting surfaces which are not effective for lightening *per se*, because their area is insufficient. These areas are discussed in the specification at page 9, lines 15 et seq, where it is stated that the non-ink-accepting surfaces of the second group are only capable of developing their lightening action in the presence of the surfaces of the first group, because they are too small *per se* to have lightening action. They can only become obstructed and remain obstructed under normal conditions of use, but used with the surfaces of the first group, they become active and their lightening action is cumulative with the lightening action of the first group of surfaces.

It is therefore possible according to the invention to further lighten printing, without the disadvantages associated with lightening as disclosed in the Nouel patent, and with numerous advantages disclosed in the specification at page 5, lines 16-25 and page 13, line 21 to page 14, line 10. As disclosed in the present specification, the invention has proved effective on practically all papers, with all presses, screens and inks, and provides excellent print quality, better productivity and savings as regards ink supply and energy.

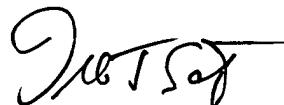
Drying of the deposited ink is improved due to better homogeneity of the ink/water mixture and thinner deposit of the mixture.

Reference is also made to the examples of the present specification, particularly comparative examples 2bis and 3bis, showing poorer print quality and other disadvantages which take place without the claimed second group of lightening surfaces according to the invention.

Withdrawal of this rejection is accordingly requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance. An early allowance of the application with amended claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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